

Scales—ctenoid on body and head; snout, maxilla and space between mandibular rami naked. Pectoral and caudal fin bases scaled, dorsal and anal fin bases scaleless.

Fins—Dorsal fin spines flexible; second dorsal fin similar to anal fin, rays notably well placed. Pelvic fin origin in advance of pectoral fin, under vertical from preopercular margin. Caudal fin truncate with 13 principal rays.

Colour in alcohol—Dark brown above, lower surface creamy. Four large dusky blotches along the sides slightly low and smaller dark blotches in interspaces. Inner rays of pelvic fin dusky, outer two rays and spine creamy white.

*Distribution*: Hawaiian Islands and the south-west coast of India; bathypelagic.

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#### 16. *DIODON HOLACANTHUS* LINNAEUS (PISCES: DIODONTIDAE) FROM INDIA

Fishes belonging to the genus *Diodon* (Family: Diodontidae), popularly known as porcupine fishes inhabit coral lagoons of warm oceans. Linnaeus (1758) described *Diodon holacanthus* from India and the species has subsequently been recorded from several parts of

the Indo-West Pacific (Herre 1953; Smith 1961; Anon 1962) but surprisingly not rediscovered from India. During a collection tour four topotypes of *D. holacanthus* were collected from Trivandrum (South-west coast of India) and are described below.

### ***Diodon holacanthus* Linnaeus**

*Diodon holacanthus* Linnaeus, 1758, Syst. Nat. 10th Ed. 335 (India).

*Diodon maculatus* var. a, Gunther, 1870, Cat. Fish. Brit. Mus., 8:307.

*Diodon holacanthus* Anon, 1962, Fish species of South China Sea: 1100-1102 (China).

#### *Material examined:*

4 fishes, 143-161 mm S.L. ex Trivandrum (16:9:1968).

#### *Description:*

D13, P21-22, A13, C8-9. Gill-rakers on first arch outer 2+7; inner 0+10.

In percentages of standard length; body depth 26.5-41.0, head length 39.2-43.1, snout length 13.5-16.6, eye diameter 9.2-10.8, postorbital length 18.9-22.7, interorbital width 25.0-34.4, caudal peduncle depth 5.4-6.0, dorsal height 15.7-18.1, anal length 15.7-23.2, pectoral length 17.1-21.5, caudal length 15.7-20.4, height of longest spine in first row 17.8-22.4, height of shortest spine in first row 16.4-18.9, pre-dorsal distance 72.1-84.8, pre-anal distance 72.8-84.4, width of mouth 13.6-14.7.

Body covered with numerous spines, spines on forehead commencing with level of front border of eye. First transverse row of four spines on forehead longest, on dorsal and ventral sides shortest, on flanks and behind pectorals longer than the latter. Thirteen spines from forehead to the origin of dorsal fin. Origin of pectoral behind gill opening, middle rays shorter. Origin of dorsal nearer to caudal. Origin of anal below origin of dorsal.

*Colour.* Ground colour generally brown on dorsal side becoming pale yellow or white towards ventral side, broad blackish-brown band between the orbits, interrupted in middle, extending downwards beyond eye; behind this parallel transverse band not descending downwards. Large subtriangular or nearly irregular spot in the middle of back; similar spot on and in advance of the base of dorsal fin. Kidney shaped spot above the pectoral.

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\*LINNAEUS, C. (1758): Systema naturae, sive, regna tria naturae systematice proposita per classes, ordines, genera et species. 10th ed. 335 p.

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\* Not referred to in original.

## 17. MOLLUSCS OF ECONOMIC VALUE FROM GREAT NICOBAR ISLAND<sup>1</sup>

(With a map)

During a scientific expedition to the Great Nicobar Island in February-May, 1966, the Zoological Survey of India team surveyed, the littoral, sub-littoral and offshore zones to assess the potential molluscan resources of these areas for exploitation. Fairly extensive shell beds of living and dead molluscs were found in these areas. The species of molluscs of economic value classified under three main categories, namely (i) as a source of food (ii) of ornamental value and (iii) as raw material for manufacture of lime and cement are listed here together with remarks as to their occurrence in and around the island.

<sup>1</sup> This paper was presented at the "Seminar on the achievements of the Scientific Expedition to the Great Nicobar Island" organised by the National Institute of Sciences of India at Varanasi on 2nd January, 1968.